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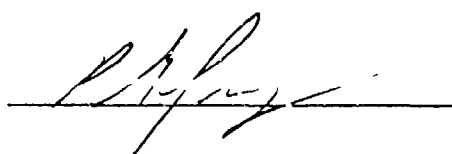
THE PROPOSAL FOR A UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT ARMED FORCE:
UNITED STATES OPTIONS

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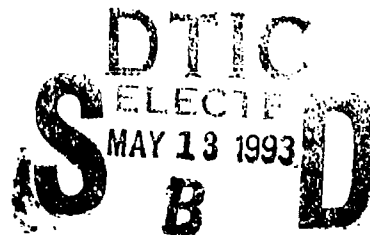
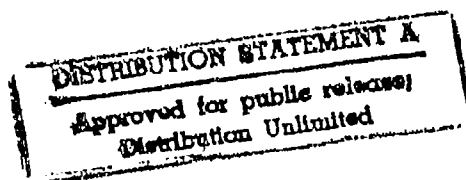
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Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

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Abstract of
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The recent proposal by the United Nations Secretary General for a permanent armed force provides the United States with several policy options. The purpose of this paper is to provide the options available and discuss the issues that bear upon choosing one of them. The scope of this paper is related to how such a permanent force would affect the U.S. regional unified commander. The end of the Cold War has created an opportunity for the creation of such a military force. U.S. national security strategy indicates that the establishment of a permanent force would provide a force multiplier for the regional military planner as well as international acceptability in pursuit of our national interests. However, both the potential loss of U.S. influence over the use of the force and an evident lack of effectiveness of the force in the field mitigate the attractiveness of this proposal. The recommended policy option is to support those aspects which seek to improve existing U.N. peacekeeping operations and eliminate the concept of a permanent force as one which will best suit the U.S. regional military planner.

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THE PROPOSAL FOR A UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT ARMED FORCE:
UNITED STATES OPTIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In June 1992, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued a report, "An Agenda for Peace," which proposed significant changes to enhance the United Nations' ability to maintain world peace. Specifically, the report called for a permanent U.N. force equipped and trained for peacemaking as well as peacekeeping. This new force would be under the command of the Secretary General.

The end of the Cold War has swept away the existing security concerns of the United States and presented new opportunities to create stability. However, security concerns in other areas have also increased. The dilemma for the United States is to decide if this proposal for change in the United Nations is in our best interests.

This paper is divided into four main sections. The first will provide the background that created the conditions for the Secretary General's initiative and the details of the proposal. The second section will discuss the major issues that will influence the policy decision. The third section will provide three policy options available to the United States to include advantages and disadvantages of each. The last section will present

the recommended option to pursue and an evaluation of that choice.

The focus of this paper is to evaluate the efficacy of the proposal vis-à-vis U.S. concerns for international regional stability. Particular attention will be devoted to its effect on the U.S. Unified Commander and his contingency planning.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

The early 1990s have been witness to a change in the established world order. The end of communism in the Soviet Union has led to the decisive end of a bipolar world and a concomitant rise of regional powers. With the end of the Cold War and assured nuclear destruction, proxy wars as a means of managing superpower conflict have also ended. However, the disputes fostered by these conflicts along with renewed nationalism have resulted in both inter and intra-national conflicts surfacing with no controlling influence provided by the superpowers.¹

As a result of this, the United Nations has begun to play a key role in places as diverse as El Salvador, the Western Sahara, Croatia, and Cambodia. U.N. peacekeepers were deployed to twelve different hot spots in the early months of 1992.² However, peacekeeping is being transformed into peacemaking.³ The United Nations is drawn into mediating not only international disputes but domestic as well. The continuing evolution of international law has given rise to the notion that the United Nations should intervene to guarantee the security of peoples not just states.

There are constraints on the U.N. activities. Financially, the United Nations has limited working capital for start-up costs of peacekeeping missions requiring contributions for each arising

crisis. Additionally, U.N. members are in arrears on general dues and peacekeeping funds (Arrears for peacekeeping forces was \$377 million in 1991).⁴ Regarding personnel, peacekeeping contingents come from member states on a voluntary basis. Training is varied and the level of organization and proficiency is ad hoc. The United Nations has no reserve stock of standard equipment. Therefore, it too is varied and dispersed while in the possession of member states. This situation has created bottlenecks preventing U.N. missions from being properly equipped and manned.⁵ In sum, the demands for U.N. services are increasing at a time when the resources as provided by the members are being stretched.

The demands on the United States have also increased. While the major regions of the world deal with their own problems there is pressure for the United States to expand its role as a world leader since it is the only power with global reach. The U.S. vision of a new world order seeks to respond to this call. The United States desires to "build a new international system in accordance with our own values and ideals" and to do this "American leadership is indispensable."⁶ However, the United States also faces constraints. Domestic economic problems and the perception that there is no specific international threat cause the public to look inward and want to disengage from the world scene. In reality, the call for the United States to be the world's

policeman will not be silenced because this is still the only power capable of the attempt.

It was this set of conditions that compelled the members of the Security Council of the United Nations to request recommendations to improve world stability and peace in January 1992. The result was the Secretary General's report, "An Agenda for Peace" released on 23 June 1992 which consisted of four concepts to improve U.N. capabilities.

The United Nations seeks to use preventive diplomacy to ease tensions before they result in conflict. This would require the establishment of an early warning process for assessing possible threats to peace. Member states' intelligence services could be utilized. Once a threat is determined, U.N. forces could be sent to an area to deter cross border attacks or prevent hostilities within a country. Also, the creation of demilitarized zones prior to a conflict vice after is envisioned.

In order to improve existing U.N. peacekeeping operations and techniques, the Secretary General seeks to establish a \$50 million fund for start-up costs; improve the training program for peacekeeping forces; and establish pre-positioned stocks of basic peacekeeping equipment under U.N. control.

The third concept seeks to expand the capabilities of the United Nations when the parties in a conflict cannot maintain a ceasefire or even agree to one. The proposal envisions the creation of a new category of U.N. forces: "Peace Enforcement Units." The role of this force is peacemaking. It would be

deployed to enforce (vice maintain) a ceasefire using coercive action against one or both parties if necessary. This force would be more heavily armed and contingents from member states provided on a permanent basis. Such a force would provide a more rapid response to a crisis enhancing U.N. credibility as a guarantor of international security. The use of this force is authorized by the Security Council but under the command of the Secretary General. It would be deployed without the consent of the parties in conflict if necessary and would take impartial coercive action only if a violation of the ceasefire occurs. However, this force is not a standing army.⁸ The contingents are predetermined and available to the United Nations for training and deployment on a 24 hour notice.

Post conflict peace building strives to prevent a recurrence of a crisis. This may require disarming parties, repatriating refugees, monitoring elections, or even de-mining a combat zone to restore the flow of people and commerce.

The United Nations also requires the existence of stable regional organizations. The parties in a dispute should turn to a local regional structure as a first recourse in finding a resolution. Such organizations will have a better understanding of the problem and may be able to contribute to a deeper sense of consensus. For the United Nations, this decentralization of crisis resolution will lighten its burden with no loss of credibility.

The above proposals must now be viewed with an eye towards the United Nations Charter. Chapter VII of the charter deals with actions with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression. It establishes step by step procedures to compel performance by member states from condemnation through the use of military force. Article 43 states: "All members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance and facilities . . ." and requires these agreements to be negotiated as soon as possible.⁹

The framers of the U.N. Charter intended the Security Council be able to take enforcement action using armed force made available by special agreements concluded in conformity with Article 43.¹⁰ However, they opposed a standing U.N. army, preferring an ad hoc force:

There is no armed force of the United Nations distinct from the armed forces of the Members. However, the armed forces of the members are unified by being placed at the disposal and under the command and strategic direction of a single body, the Security Council, assisted by a Military Staff Committee.¹¹

The proposal of the U.N. Secretary General is the long awaited fulfillment of the original intent of the Charter.

The Secretary General's proposal creates opportunities and raises dilemmas for the U.S. security and military policy makers. Aspects of the proposal are much needed reforms aimed at making

the historical functions of the United Nations operate better (i.e., peacekeeping). Other aspects, specifically the creation of a permanent force with an enforcement role, have bearing on U.S. interests both directly vis-à-vis our regional security strategy and indirectly regarding the effectiveness of such a force in particular crisis.

CHAPTER III

MAJOR ISSUES

Effect Upon United States' Interests.

In order to evaluate the effect of the Secretary General's proposal for a permanent U.N. force, U.S. interest must be defined. With respect to international regional concerns, the U.S. national security strategy is clear.

The United States seeks whenever possible in concert with its allies, to . . . deter any aggression that could threaten the security of the United States and its allies . . . To build and sustain such relationships, (the U.S.) seek(s) to establish a more balanced partnership with our allies and a greater sharing of global leadership and responsibilities; strengthen international institutions like the United Nations to make them more effective in promoting peace (and) world order . . . (The U.S. desires) to maintain stable regional military balances to deter those powers that might seek regional dominance.

Due to the elimination of the Soviet threat, worldwide threats are expected to be regional, therefore requiring a regional focus for national military planners. Concurrent with this thinking is the reality of the military faced with reductions and restructuring to a smaller base force. This force must be able during peacetime to train with allies in order to develop interoperability and in addition, further develop the planning mechanism for contingencies in any part of the world or level of crisis. In order to achieve this goal, planning must be decentralized to the regional unified commander in chief (CINC).² This effort will require increasing reliance upon multilateral

operations under the auspices of international security organizations. The United States must, therefore, be prepared to fight as part of an ad hoc coalition if we become involved in a conflict where no formal security relationships exist.³ This appears to indicate that U.S. policy would like to at least continue the current role of the United Nations if not making it more efficient in order to increase the burden sharing.

There are benefits from the more far-reaching aspects of the proposal dealing with a permanent force with enforcement powers that bear directly upon U.S. regional contingency planning. As noted above, demands for U.S. forward presence throughout the world are not likely to decrease even though the military base force does. A permanent U.N. force as envisioned by the Secretary General would come to represent a "known quantity" to any potential aggressor. Its size and capabilities would become recognizable through training exercises and use in the field even though it is not a standing force. The scope and status of training is quantifiable, even tailorable to U.S. requirements. Over time, interoperability could be achieved between the U.S. military and the U.N. force to a degree that is not now possible with an ad hoc force.

This precondition would allow U.S. regional commanders to factor the U.N. force into contingency plans for the best effect at the low end of the conflict spectrum to complement overall American strategy. Utilizing the U.N. force would also tend to internationalize the effort earlier in the crisis. Many con-

licts in the post-Cold War world can be envisioned to arise in among nations that were either under the former Soviet Union's control or European colonial rule. Elements of distrust due to past oppression may limit a unilateral U.S. response.⁴ Efforts to seek a multilateral response may surrender the chance of a rapid response to end the crisis. Additionally, the majority of violent disputes today are not conventional wars between nation states, but rather domestic ethnic and political conflicts that may require a U.N. military unit that can impose itself into the situation.⁵ Indeed, the U.N. force may be the only politically acceptable vehicle for the United States to defend its national interests.

The use of the U.S. military abroad can be a contentious issue with the American public. At times, there is no public consensus at home regardless of the severity of the crisis abroad. The current situation in former Yugoslavia demonstrates that U.S. policy actions are dependent in part upon the full identification of a public consensus. However, that crisis in particular continues unabated. A U.N. permanent force that may or may not contain a U.S. contingent of combat troops could be employed early in support of preventive diplomacy or peacemaking before the crisis grows to the further detriment of U.S. regional and national interests. This action may proceed or be concurrent with a public debate.

United States' and United Nations' interests for a peaceful and stable world are in harmony at present. Utilization of a

permanent force may, therefore, act as a force multiplier in support of U.S. interests. However, there are possible detriments to these interests. The command and control of the U.N. Force envisioned by the Secretary General implies a loss of control of American forces by a U.S. commander. This diminishment of sovereignty may give rise in the United States to a fear of a further over extension of American commitment. Indeed, the world community at large may not be prepared to take such a step. Members of the United Nations continue to remain reluctant to permit the use of armed force as envisioned by the framers of the Charter even though they will continue to seek collective security.⁶ The United States specifically never showed any intention of placing the recent Gulf War coalition under Security Council control in accordance with the Charter.⁷

The basic premise of advantage to be gained from a permanent force rests upon the assumption of a continuing convergence of U.S. and U.N. interests both in general goals and specific policy implementation. However, if U.N. reliance upon preponderant American financial and military support were to decrease, U.S. influence on policy implementation could decrease as well.⁸ Furthermore, since any member of the Security Council with veto authority can stop the use of the permanent force, it will never be a reliable force option upon which the regional commander can plan.

Another consideration in contemplating the use of a U.N. force is that it may be seen as a cloak for U.S. interests which crosses over "the fine line between legitimate leadership and hegemonic imposition."⁹ The United Nations itself may be seen as an agent of a new age of colonialism, thus undercutting any advantage gained by the United States to internationalize the response to a crisis. In fact, an attempt to draw outside powers into a regional dispute at a point in time when with the end of the Cold War, they had begun to disengage can taint the United Nations in the eyes of the locals and the United States if it is too tightly bound to the effort.¹⁰

Initial reactions to the proposal by the Bush Administration were guarded indicating that they had "serious reservations" concerning the permanent force.¹¹ This may well reflect the concerns noted above and that administration's stated desire for ad hoc solutions based on experience gained from the Gulf War. "Americans prefer proceeding on selected items one step at a time avoiding those steps that would place their troops under foreign control."¹²

Effectiveness of a United Nations Permanent Force.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of a permanent force it will be necessary to review the track record of U.N. operations to date. Although there is none for the type of peacemaking mission envisioned by the Secretary General, the record is full for peacekeeping missions. The first four decades of the

United Nations saw fourteen such operations. The United Nations found a useful niche for peacekeeping in a bipolar world in spite of Cold War tensions. Over the years the U.N. peacekeepers gained a reputation as being impartial and frequently succeeded in preventing or mitigating bloodshed.¹³ In cases such as Suez, Congo, and Cyprus violence might not even have occurred if military action had been initiated prior to the disruption of the peace.¹⁴ The essential features of successful peacekeeping operations are readily discernable. The conflict was beyond the parties' ability to resolve and had international ramifications for world order. However, both parties consented to allow the introduction of a U.N. force. That force was then tailored to the situation with regards to size, capabilities and make-up. Finally, there was no enforcement provision given to the peacekeepers other than self-defense.¹⁵

Habitually, peacekeeping missions have gotten off to poor starts forcing delays in their deployment due to lack of a properly trained force, financial backing, and planning.¹⁶ The improvements gained from the establishment of a permanent force include creation of a continuous training program, standard operating procedures, expeditious financing, and the full implementation of a Military Staff Committee for planning. This improved coordination can greatly reduce the perennial problem of familiarizing new contingent units with U.N. procedures and practices.¹⁷ The valued impartiality earned by the United Nations

could be emphasized by recruiting from a broad variety of nations possibly excluding the superpowers. Finally, it is hoped that aggression can be deterred by the existence of a permanent force that can be ready for early deployment and employment.

In regards to the effectiveness of a U.N. force vis-à-vis a regional organization, the United Nations Charter calls for reliance when possible on such organizations to settle disputes (Chapter VIII: Regional Arrangements). Regionally based institutions can have a greater understanding of the causes of security problems affecting their region. Incentives for managing the conflict are higher due to the proximity of the consequences. Therefore, a greater degree of consensus will exist over the basic values indigenous to the region.¹⁸ Regional organizations with standing military forces (e.g., The European Community/Western European Union) tend to be more closely tied to U.S. interests since they are the result of U.S. bilateral/multilateral agreements. These arrangements can already provide many of the benefits noted above envisioned by the proposal for a U.N. permanent force. However, few such institutions currently exist. Those that do inevitably contain nations from the region that may become so embroiled in the conflict as to make a community decision impossible. The European Community's lack of response in former Yugoslavia illustrates the incapacity of even well endowed organizations to manage conflicts in their own regions.¹⁹ Regional arrangements with military arms are likely to be formed in response to a specific threat and consequently are based upon

hostility between groups. This further weakens their ability to intervene as the United Nations has done in the past. Ultimately, regional conflicts will require an outside impartial arbitration.

A U.N. permanent force's mission is to be ready to respond to conflict. No two conflicts are the same and are becoming increasingly complex with the introduction of sophisticated weapons. Each crisis requires a different force make-up and each employed force must be improvised to match the conflict.²⁰ A permanent force would have to be exceedingly large and expensive to meet every contingency. This aspect may be beyond the desires of the members to support such a force.

The United Nations' reputation for impartiality is partly founded on the no enforcement policy utilized by the peacekeepers. To impose enforcement upon unwilling recipients would result in a loss of this hard won reputation.²¹ However, to maintain this policy in order to retain impartiality would deter the force from achieving the initiative and consequently decreasing its military effectiveness. Once the U.N. force's perceived impartiality is lost, the U.N. organization will cease to be an effective arbitrator after hostilities end.²²

Another potential outcome of the establishment of a permanent force is rooted in one of its advertised advantages. In order to create a credible force standard operating procedures must be promulgated to include the circumstances for the force's

use. This would over time become a measurable and predicable threshold. A potential aggressor would be able to keep its incursions below the threshold in order to avoid U.N. mobilization.²³ This could erode the deterrent value of the permanent force at low levels of conflict.

There is evidence that a U.N. permanent force could be effective. The United Nations has gained much experience operating large multinational forces. The aspects of the proposal that deal with reform of existing operations may well increase their effectiveness. Additionally, the permanent force should be able to handle the type of mission the United Nations has been doing and with a more rapid response. However, there is no guarantee that such a force can enhance the United Nations beyond its current role or be more advantageous to the U.S. regional planner than a more fully prepared ad hoc force.

CHAPTER IV

POLICY OPTIONS

Support Proposal.

This policy option would support the proposal of the U.N. Secretary General to include both reforms and the establishment of a permanent force under his control. The principal advantage of this option rests with the fact that U.S. and U.N. interests are in harmony in the new world order. The United States is faced with a decreasing military base force concurrent with a desire to burden share our responsibility in crisis resolution. The proposed reforms along with a permanent force provide U.S. regional military planners with a potential well-trained interoperative force and an acceptable (to the international community) instrument to further U.S. goal of world peace and stability. The principal disadvantage of this option rests in the effectiveness of the permanent force for the United States. This force will be under the direct control of the Secretary General to meet a specific ad hoc threat. However, its composition will be of a broad base designed to meet a generic threat. The composition and utilization must, therefore, change as the situation changes complicating the integration of the force into U.S. regional plans. Unlike an alliance or coalition which would be formed in response to a specific threat, the members that initially contribute to a permanent force cannot know beforehand whether they will support the effort.

Support Modified Proposal.

This policy option would support only the reforms but not the establishment of a permanent force. Specifically, the creation of improved financial, training, planning mechanisms would provide advantages to U.S. regional planners. The increased effectiveness of a proven diplomatic and peacekeeping instrument would allow the integration of an ad hoc force into contingency planning with a higher expectation of interoperability and unity of effort than is currently possible.

However, this policy option fails to respond to the current opportunity to fulfill the framers vision of the United Nations with regards to regional security. The chance to achieve rapid response is forfeited. This may allow a crisis to fester to a point where the United States has little choice but to unilaterally become engaged. The United States will inevitably be continued to be pressured to play the world's policeman as the first choice in a crisis. This will only stretch U.S. resources further.

Seek Enhancement of Regional Arrangements.

This policy option would seek to rely upon an enhancement of regional organizations to develop resolutions at the expense of change in the United Nations. The principal advantage to the regional military planner is that regional arrangements can be more readily designed to meet the requirements of an interoperative force. Since its scope is more narrow there is greater potential for cohesion and reliability in contingency planning.

However, regional financial and military capabilities are potentially more limited than that of the United States. Therefore, the United States may end up being the major source of equipment and personnel. This option is less efficient and more expensive if the United States is required to form an alliance in every region of possible conflict.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDED OPTION

The second option is recommended. This policy option seeks to respond to the need to improve the U.N. capabilities in our era of increasing conflicts that defy Cold War solutions. By eliminating the permanent force provision, the U.S. regional military planner does not lose a vital force option. The United States can retain the initiative in crisis response by including the improved U.N. peacekeepers in the process, thereby internationalizing the solution. This option reduces the risk that the United States will lose influence of a supra-national force that may be ill suited for the specific threat. The ad hoc U.N. force has a greater chance of retaining impartiality. This attribute in the long run will be more valuable to achieving lasting peace and stability in a region than the speed in which a force can be deployed and the manner it is employed.

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